

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
DOTE-00 EB-07 H-01 INR-07 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 OC-06 PRS-01 SS-15 USIE-00
USSS-00 SY-05 FAA-00 WRD-01 MCT-01 SSO-00 PPT-01
SCA-01 SCS-03 INRE-00 /095 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEGUEWE 4864
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DOHA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 1397

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, QA
SUBJECT: HIJACKING OF GULF AIR AIRCRAFT
REF: DOHA 796 (NOTAL)

1. GOB ASST. UNDERSECRETARY FOR CIVIL AVIATION AND GULF AIR BOARD MEMBER, SHAIKH ISA BIN ABDULLAH AL KHALIFA, CONFIRMED TO EMBASSY THAT GULF AIR FLIGHT NO. 122 LONDON/DUBAI/MUSCAT HAS BEEN HIJACKED AND DIVERTED TO DOHA AIRPORT. ACCORDING TO SHAIKH ISA THE FOLLOWING FACTS ARE KNOWN: THE HIJACKER IS A SINGLE MALE, NATIONALITY UNKNOWN, WHO IS CARRYING ONE HAND GRENADE. IT IS THOUGHT THAT HE BOARDED THE PLANE IN DUBAI.

2. HE IS DESCRIBED ASBEING "VERY NERVOUS AND INEXPERIENCED", SO MUCH SO THAT PILOT WAS ABLE TO BROADCAST URGENT APPEALS THROUGHOUT THE AREA ABOUT THE HIJACKING. ALL REGIONAL AIRPORTS WERE CLOSED THIS MORNING AS A RESULT,
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BUT FOR REASONS NOT CLEAR TO SHAIKH ISA DOHA AIRPORT ALLOWED PLANE TO LAND. THE QATARI ARMED FORCES HAVE SURROUNDED THE AIRCRAFT, "TO CLOSELY" ACCORDING TO SHAIKH ISA, AND THERE IS CONCERN THAT THE HIJACKER, INCREASINGLY NERVOUS, WILL PANIC.

3. MOST OF THE PASSENGERS ARE OF OMANI NATIONALITY,
INCLUDING THE SON AND DAUGHTER OF THE OMANI MINISTER
OF COMMUNICATIONS, ABDUL HAFIZ SALIM RAJAB, WHO IS ALSO
DIRECTOR OF GULF AIR.

4. SHAIKH ISA ASSURED EMBASSY HE IS URGENTLY ATTEMPTING
TO ASCERTAIN NATIONALITY OF PASSENGERS, BUT HE HAD NO
INFORMATION ABOUT AMERICANS ON BOARD. WE ARE URGENTLY
TRYING TO GET MANIFEST DETAILS FROM GULF AIR HEADQUARTERS
WHICH IS IN UNDERSTANDABLY CHAOTIC CONDITION NOW. LONDON MIGHT
HAVE BETTER LUCK. GULF AIR MANAGING DIRECTOR SALIM
BIN NASSIR AL-DUSAIDI HAS DEPARTED BAHRAYN FOR DOHA
BUT PERMISSION OF THE AMIR OF QATAR FOR HIS PLANE TO LAND
HAS NOT YET BEEN FORTHCOMING.

5. MOTIVE SHAIKH ISA SAYS THAT NO DEMANDS HAVE YET
BEEN FORTHCOMING AS FAR AS HE IS AWARE. HIS ASSUMPTION
IS THAT MAN, HAVING NOTED RECENT HIJACKING ATTEMPT IN
KUWAIT, WILL ASK FOR MONEY.

6. PRESIDENT OF BAHRAYN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES
MOHAMMAD JALAL WHO HAPPENED TO BE WITH AMBASSADOR AS WE
CONFIRMED THIS INFORMATION SAID THAT RUMOR ALREADY IS
AROUND TOWN THAT THE HIJACKING HAD BEEN ORGANIZED BY
FORMER AMIR OF QATAR, RESIDENT IN DUBAI, AND THAT THE
MOTIVE IS THUS RELATED TO INTERNAL QATARI POLITICS.

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7. WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO GARNER MORE INFORMATION AND WILL
REPORT AS AND WHEN WE SUCCEED.

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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